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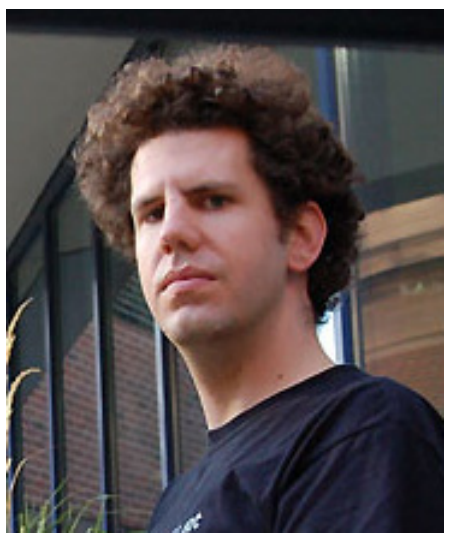

Reid Priedhorsky
IBM T.J. Watson Research Center

"Geographic Wikis and Beyond"

Thursday, April 7, 2011
10:00 - 11:00 AM
TA-3, Bldg. 1690, Room 102 (CNLS Conference Room)

Abstract: Of the many fascinating trends that the Internet is nurturing, I will focus on two. One is open content, where users produce most or all of a site's value (c.f. Wikipedia, Stack Overflow, and YouTube). The other is geographic content: Google Maps and its peers make easy-to-use and high-quality maps available to anyone with a web browser, and their associated APIs support geographic "mashups" on a wide range of topics, from taxi fare to earthquakes to "geogreetings". Furthermore, these trends are merging. Internet-based open content tools and communities are useful even when people are physically present in the same city or neighborhood, and shared locality leads to shared local experiences and needs.

This talk is concerned with a new type of system which enhances the utility of this emerging area: the geographic wiki or "geowiki". I will explain how the logical conclusion of open content (wikis, where anyone can edit anything) can be adapted to the geographic domain and how this strange new model of mass collaboration functions within it. The discussion will focus on Cyclopath, a web-based mapping application serving the navigation needs of bicyclists in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, which we created to explore the geowiki idea. The results of our experiments show that this new collaboration model works, and these results are of broad interest because they affect any geographically-grounded community where important information is distributed among its members.

But the core innovation of geowikis is not about geography; rather, it is about the utility of adapting the wiki model to structured data. We need to build wikis with an arbitrary data model, and we need to let the crowd change not just content but form as well. I will outline a vision for such wikis and discuss how we are moving forward with this vision at IBM, in a project code-named MoCoMapps.

Biography: Reid Priedhorsky is a research staff member at IBM T.J. Watson Research Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA and holds a Ph.D. in computer science from the University of Minnesota. As a researcher focusing on collaborative and social computing, the principle which motivates him is sustainability - he works to empower communities to make better decisions in pursuit of a more sustainable future. He does this by building new tools for creating and communicating knowledge, with a special focus on open content and mass collaboration techniques such as wikis.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading, bicycling, photography, hiking (especially in the mountains and deserts of the American West), tinkering and building things, and general hacking and programming.

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